

COLORADO TRANSPORTATION PRINCIPLES

PREAMBLE

Colorado's rapid growth over the past 25 years has pushed the transportation system beyond its capacity and available funding. The result is that we are using today's transportation dollars to solve yesterday's transportation problems while trying to adequately plan and fund our future transportation systems.

We must concentrate efforts and make major changes in the transportation arena to preserve and enhance Colorado's economic development, tourism, quality of life, viability and sustainability.

A comprehensive, long-term statewide transportation vision must continue to be developed and enhanced to reflect needs from regional and local perspectives. That balanced effort should include:

- Evaluating the state's and regions' current transportation planning process to identify and implement the most effective planning process for the state's transportation system;*
- Continuation of a proactive relationship between the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), regional planning organizations and local governments; and*
- Balancing the use of long-term financial commitments without unfairly encumbering future generations.*

A statewide coalition of communities and business interests across Colorado offers the following principles, which are intended to inform and assist decision-makers, community leaders and the general public in developing a balanced policy to address Colorado's transportation challenges. The principles are intended to begin our earnest efforts to find answers that benefit all Coloradans, for this and future generations. They should be considered as a whole and not advocated individually. In addition, the coalition believes the urgency of the issues must transcend politics and geographic boundaries.

In this spirit, this document is intended to be a working, dynamic document. All parties commit to remain at the table where the principles may be amended or expanded as times and conditions change.

PRINCIPLES

A. Secure Adequate Funding to Support the Long-term Transportation Vision

1. Invest Necessary Funding to Preserve and Maintain Colorado's Transportation Infrastructure

- a. Colorado's current transportation infrastructure is the backbone and foundation for the State's future transportation system.
- b. Maintaining and preserving the current transportation infrastructure is critical because:

- i. Deferred routine maintenance projects become reconstruction projects at substantially higher costs;
 - ii. Other projects are delayed or lost;
 - iii. Safety is compromised; and
 - iv. Mobility is impaired.
- c. Maintaining the transportation infrastructure must include state and local roads and bridges; transit; rail and aviation infrastructure.
- d. The transportation infrastructure needs to be maintained in a manner that meets established performance standards.
- e. The transportation infrastructure needs to be improved to current design standards where appropriate.

2. Invest Necessary Funding to Avoid and Alleviate Congestion and Improve Mobility Statewide.

- a. Enhancing and improving the current transportation infrastructure is critical, otherwise:
 - i. Safety is compromised.
 - ii. Congestion increases the cost of consumer goods and services; and costs commuters and businesses lost time and wasted fuel.
- b. Pursue multi-modal transportation solutions that provide access across the state, while preserving the quality of life in our communities including but not limited to:
 - i. Increasing cooperation and collaboration between CDOT, regional organizations, local governments, transit providers and other transportation agencies;
 - ii. Achieving mutual goals as part of the comprehensive statewide vision;
 - iii. Leveraging federal, state and local resources;
 - iv. Encouraging transit-oriented development (TOD) where appropriate to reduce travel demand and use;
 - v. Improving and integrating bus and fixed-guideway systems (dedicated transit right-of-ways);
 - vi. Expanding capacity through the use of HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle), HOT (High Occupancy Tolling) and Toll lanes; and
 - vii. Reducing single occupant users and vehicle miles traveled; and
 - viii. Including safe, accessible routes for cyclists and pedestrians.
 - ix. Explore and pursue opportunities to relocate commercial traffic (rail and truck), utilities and through-traffic outside of congested areas in cooperation with local governments.
- c. Balance the allocation of resources between current and future transportation needs (including but not limited to the development of new transportation corridors).
- d. CDOT should develop performance measures for congestion as it has done for pavement condition, surface treatments, bridge structures and safety and make appropriate investments to avoid and alleviate congestion statewide to meet those measures.

3. Secure Additional Funding for Colorado's Transportation Infrastructure

- a. Acknowledge that all Coloradans must participate in solutions to the transportation-funding dilemma.
- b. Develop additional resources
 - i. Evaluate and consider enhancement of existing funding mechanisms including but not limited to:
 - 1. Increasing or indexing the gas tax
 - 2. Alternative fuels or fuel sources
 - 3. Advocating for additional federal dollars

- 4. Reviewing SB-01 and its “trigger”
 - 5. Vehicle Registration Fee
 - 6. License Fees
- ii. Evaluate and consider New Funding Mechanisms, including but not limited to
 - 1. Further utilize tolling authority
 - 2. Amend fiscal constraints such as TABOR/Amendment 23/Gallagher, while preserving the basic premise of voter approval for any tax increases
 - 3. Explore new tax sources
 - 4. Use Rural/Regional Transportation Authorities (RTAs)
 - 5. Encourage private/public partnerships
 - 6. Development fees
 - 7. General Fund Allocation
 - 8. Enhance existing bonding authority.
 - 9. Alternative User Fees
 - a. “Wheel Fee”
 - b. Vehicle Miles Traveled Fee
 - c. Congestion pricing
 - d. Infrastructure utility fee
- iii. Other
- c. New funds generated locally should not negatively affect State Transportation funding allocation.

4. Efficiently spending dollars that are currently available including but not limited to:

- a. CDOT and local entities are encouraged to cooperate on locally or privately-funded improvements to the State Highway System as long as those improvements are consistent with the applicable regional and state transportation plans and procedures.
- b. Strike a balance between the purpose of the project, the need for environmental protection, environmental justice, and public participation while achieving timely completion of the environmental review process.
- c. Off system improvements that relieve state highway congestion should be considered for state funding.

B. Enhance the Roles of all Participants in the State’s Transportation Planning Process

1. Encourage broad participation in the continuing development and enhancement of the strategic, statewide vision for transportation.

- a. Continue improving the planning process in the development, enhancement and implementation of a comprehensive statewide strategic vision.
- b. Improve opportunities to encourage input into the planning process by the general public.
- c. Improve communications between local, regional and state transportation agencies and the general public; and encourage local and regional agencies to utilize CDOT in the development of local and regional transportation priorities.
- d. Ensure that the statewide vision is coordinated with regional and local communities to assure priorities, plans and visions are consistent with one another.
- e. Recognize multi-modal options for urban as well as rural areas.

2. Elevate Public Awareness of the Statewide Transportation Challenges

- a. Educate the public about the transportation planning process and opportunities for involvement in that process.
 - b. Develop an ongoing campaign to educate and engage the public on local, regional and state transportation needs (both current and future) and the growing discrepancy between the cost of those needs and resources currently available to meet them. Communicate the urgency of making investments in the transportation system today to avoid substantially higher costs in the future.
 - c. Emphasize the vital relationship between transportation infrastructure and the economic viability of the state, as well as that of local and regional communities.
3. **Acknowledge that Viable Transportation Corridors Support and Sustain Regional and Statewide Economic Development**
- a. The comprehensive statewide transportation vision must recognize the vital relationship between the transportation system (air, rail, highway and transit), the efficient movement of people, goods and services (intra- and inter-regional), and economic sustainability for the State of Colorado.

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